

valued, and the sanctuary of God's house so much forsaken.

But the same Being whose creative fiat gave form and order and beauty to the world, and who carries on from age to age its glorious economy, appointed and has continued to conduct the glorious system of His grace and truth in Christ Jesus. And whilst this system has lessons clearer and more consolatory than nature's laws and beauties, and whilst the christian religion is invested with a certain jurisdiction over the mind's operations, yet these all are governed and pervaded by one set of ruling principles; they are as one grand scheme of progressive administration, and are tending to one glorious consummation.

In the illustration, then, of gospel themes, analogies from nature and the discoveries of science may well be employed, in subordination, of course, to the glorious design of the gospel ministry—subduing the unbelief of the heart, attracting the affections to Christ, and bringing the soul to an humble belief and reception of God's power and love to save. If this religion have a seat in our hearts we will respect the works of our God, our reconciled and loving Father, and regard the operations of His hands; and in the knowledge and admiration of such, our souls' devotion and sympathy will be drawn out to Him.

II. The gospel is glorious from the very nature of the facts and themes which its revelation discloses.

There is a certain distinction which might be noted between the gospel itself and its revelation to the world. The sciences, in their principles and laws and truths, had a being *previous* to those circumstances and mediums of their revelation to man. So the gospel existed, and has a place independent of its announcement to the creatures. Its distinguishing facts and themes were in the Divine Mind; and without their revelation, they would have continued to us a mystery—deep and unfathomable. They were not discoverable to us by the light reflected from nature, nor could they have arisen from our unaided mental powers.

It is a glory of the gospel there, that its revelation brings to light those sublime doctrines, and informs us that there are momentous events inseparably connected with our eternal destiny. We may learn much of God's wisdom and power and goodness from the things which are made. We may arrive at some true notions of the Divine Majesty and government in the world. But, considering ourselves as sinners before God, who is essentially just and holy; and in view of his righteous laws—burdened with conscious demerit and guilt, the great question is—how are our sins to be pardoned? Here *the one thing* needful for us is an exemption from deserved wrath, and our natures fitted for God's happiness. These are subjects which cannot be learned from the book of nature, and all the

pretended solutions of philosophy on such points, are vague, contradictory and impious.

“Let all the heathen writers join!
To form one perfect book;
Great God! if once compared with thine,
How mean their writings look!

Nor the most perfect rules they gave.
Could shew one sin forgiven,
Nor leave a step beyond the grave.
But thine conduct to heaven.”

That system then must surely have a glory which settles these momentous questions to us, and sets our mind at rest by sure information that the Divine placability is toward his offending and erring creatures. Here the gospel annunciations correct that painful ignorance, and remove that ominous dubiety which like thick darkness brooded over humanity. Here such information is supplied which ruins our sinking hopes, and enlightens our pathway to eternity.

But brethren, as our remarks must be confined within proper limits, we shall, on this fertile topic of the gospel's glorious facts and themes,—just bring to our notice the angelic declaration at the Saviour's birth into our world, and also two or three of the phrases in terms of which the gospel is spoken of by the apostle.

In the words of the heavenly messenger,—“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,” and in the ascription of Divine praise, which then arose from the celestial company, “Glory to God in the highest, and on the earth peace, goodwill toward men,” we have it affirmed of a preached gospel, that it is good tidings, and that, in its facts and themes, it is excellent and glorious in the highest degree. And coming to consider the gospel under scriptural titles, such for instance as the gospel of the grace of God—the gospel of peace—and the gospel of our salvation, we cannot but be sensible that it has an excellent glory. Here God seems to be brought nearer to us than by the economy of nature. He speaks to us His words and unfolds his gracious character and designs for humanity's elevation and happiness. How glorious then that revelation, so replete with love and mercy and happiness to our race!—How glorious then that revelation, so replete with love and mercy and happiness to our race!—How glorious that economy of grace so designed and adapted by infinite wisdom, for recalling humanity from error and misery and suffering, to an inheritance of honor, immortality, and glory! And in contemplating those great facts and operations with which all this is inseparably identified, such as the humiliation and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God in his incarnation in our world—His resurrection and his ascension and intercession in glorified human nature—and humanity coming to have a fellowship with Him in His sufferings and death, and to throw the power of His resurrection, not by human wisdom and might, but by the